

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# Environmental Justice Assessment and Budgeting & Funding Obligation Report Community Budgeting for Decarbonization and Resilience



DOH 334-599 December 2025



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# Environmental Justice Reporting Overview

An Environmental Justice Assessment is an opportunity to assess the environmental justice impacts of an agency action. The template is designed to meet all of the requirements established under Washington’s Environmental Justice Law (also known as the Healthy Environment for All, or HEAL, Act). While it was developed by the HEAL Interagency Working Group, this document has been adapted by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) to meet agency needs for fulfilling the requirements of completing an EJA.

**Table 1: Environmental Justice Assessment and Budgeting & Funding Overview**

<b>Primary agency responsible for this action</b>	Washington State Department of Health (DOH)
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<b>Description of proposed significant agency action and/or budget activity</b>	<b>Community Budgeting for Decarbonization and Resilience:</b> Legislature allocated DOH \$38.6 million to develop and run a participatory budgeting project that will fund community identified projects that benefit overburdened communities as defined in the Climate Commitment Act. We must select at least five geographically diverse communities in Washington to develop and prioritize projects that achieve the greatest gain for decarbonization and resilience. The proviso requires legislative approval prior to funding any projects.
<b>Date environmental justice assessment was initiated</b>	February 2024
<b>Date environmental justice assessment was completed</b>	December 2025

**Table 1 Continued: Environmental Justice Assessment and Budgeting & Funding Overview**

<p><b>Type of significant agency action (check one)</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The development and adoption of significant legislative rules as defined in <a href="#">RCW 34.05.328</a><sup>1</sup></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The development and adoption of any new grant or loan program that a covered agency is explicitly authorized or required by statute to carry out</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A capital project, grant, or loan award by a covered agency of at least \$12,000,000 or a transportation project, grant, or loan by a covered agency of at least \$15,000,000</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The submission of agency request legislation to the office of the governor or the office of financial management for approval</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other agency actions deemed significant by a covered agency consistent with <a href="#">RCW 70A.02.060</a><sup>2</sup>, if yes, name: _____</p>
<p><b>Budgeting Activity</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Writing a Decision Package</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Establishing and/or administering a grant program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establishing and/or administering a loan</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establishing and/or administering a contract</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staffing a program with environmental benefits or harms</p>
<p><b>Link(s) to initial notification with Office of Financial Management and/or other postings, such as publicly available results, materials, or reports related to the assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EJA Notification</li> <li>• Final evaluation report</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> RCW 34.05.328  
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=34.05.328#:~:text=PDF%20RCW%2034.05.328%20Significant%20legislative%20rules%2C%20other%20selected,objectives%20of%20the%20statute%20that%20the%20rule%20implements%3B>

<sup>2</sup> RCW 70A.02.060 <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.02.060>

## Background Information

The Department of Health (DOH) is conducting an Environmental Justice Assessment on a participatory budgeting project to fund community informed projects that benefit overburdened communities. In 2023, the Environmental Justice Council in its Climate Commitment Act (CCA) budget recommendations, recommended the use of participatory budgeting process to engage communities in identifying and prioritizing projects that will achieve the greatest gain for decarbonization and resilience. The legislature provided funding to DOH, in consultation with the Environmental Justice Council, to implement participatory budgeting. DOH was tasked with identifying at least five geographically diverse overburdened communities and engaging them in participatory budgeting, which is a democratic process where community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. The process itself can take one community between 12-24 months to complete. The typical participatory budgeting cycle has several steps including:

1. **Designing the participatory budgeting process:** During this stage, a steering committee that represents the organization or community creates the rules and engagement plan. The rules and engagement plan will include the overarching goal of the participatory budgeting cycle.
2. **Brainstorming ideas of how to use the budget:** Over the course of a few weeks and through meetings and online tools, participants share and discuss ideas for projects.
3. **Developing projects to use the budget:** Volunteer budget delegates develop the ideas into feasible proposals.
4. **Voting on projects:** Participants vote on proposals that best serve the organization or community's needs.
5. **Funding the winning projects:** The organization or community implements the winning ideas.
6. **Evaluating how the process went:** The steering committee and participants evaluate if the goals were met and plan changes for the next cycle.

The projects selected in each community must achieve the greatest gain for decarbonization and resilience. Decarbonization means reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon output. Examples of projects that contribute to decarbonization include switching vehicle fleets from gas to electric, installing solar panels, capturing carbon dioxide and storing it underground, reducing emissions in energy-intensive industries, and switching to renewable energy. Resilience is the ability to recover from the impacts to health and infrastructure resulting from climate change. However, resilience can take on many different meanings for different communities. Through participatory budgeting, communities determine what resilience means for their respective communities.

The legislature required that any proposed projects be approved by the legislature prior to DOH

entering into any contracts, which created a logistical challenge with regards to implementing the process but also risked DOH losing trust with communities if prioritized projects were not funded.

In the first grant cycle, the DOH convened a community advisory committee (CAC), a youth advisory committee (YAC), and completed Tribal consultation. The CAC was tasked with identifying at least five geographically diverse overburdened communities. The CAC recommended six communities ranging from counties, to cities, to specific neighborhoods. The YAC was facilitated by a third-party consultant and met 10 times between late February through the first weekend of June 2025. Its final product will serve as blueprint for participatory budgeting process in the six identified communities. Through Tribal consultation, DOH heard from Tribal governments about the appropriate amount to set aside for Tribes and how to uphold sovereignty by allowing Tribes to use their

existing collaborative budgeting processes. Program staff ensured decision making was driven by communities and Tribes by centering these deliberate processes.

During this project, program staff also encountered challenges in distinguishing participatory budgeting from participatory grantmaking. Many people don't know what participatory budgeting is or they conflate it with participatory grant making. Participatory budgeting is a process that requires multiple steps and involves the broader community in identifying and prioritizing projects, and then funds are allocated to the top projects. The process itself can take one community between 12-24 months to complete. The steps are further detailed above. The amount of time required to identify communities and conduct a participatory budgeting process exceeds the 2-year timeline for the proviso. Moving forward, it is recommended that participatory budgeting be rolled out in phases over a 6-year timeline.

In the 2025-2027 biennium, funding for this program was renewed by legislature and the Department of Commerce was tasked with implementation.

# Section 1: Determine Environmental Justice Goals & Metrics

- 1. What are your environmental justice goals and performance metrics for this program? Please explain how they are calculated and their significance to your program's success.**

As described by the proposed logic model for the community budgeting program below, this program's long-term goals are to work toward a future in which: communities are meaningfully involved in co-governance around environmental health; overburdened communities have what they need to be healthy and resilient to climate change; and there is a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in overburdened communities. Based on the program's activities, intermediate outputs and outcomes are expected to lead to these long-term impacts.

We propose the following metrics, selected because they are aimed at measuring key early outputs and outcomes outlined in the logic model:

- Amount of money used to enact the participatory budgeting process for decarbonization and climate change resilience projects.
- Number of community participants (e.g. in community advisory committees, youth advisory committees).
- Percentage of grantees who report that the community-designed process centers community/Tribal needs.
- Percentage of participants who report that their understanding of environmental justice has increased due to participation.

**Table 2: Proposed logic model for community budgeting program**

Inputs	Sustained Financing	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Long-term impact
<p>\$38.6 million for community budgeting</p> <p>DOH staff</p> <p>Community input</p> <p>EJ Council</p>		<p>Tribal engagement</p> <p>Community engagement</p> <p>Select at least 5 geographically diverse overburdened communities to engage in participatory budgeting process</p> <p>Develop decarbonization project proposals via participatory budgeting</p> <p>Technical assistance for applicants and grantees</p> <p>Community informed process design</p> <p>Work toward removing the Legislature approval requirement for participatory budgeting projects</p>	<p>Grant process that community agrees center equity and reflects Tribal and community needs</p> <p>Communities define decarbonization goals and what is needed to achieve them</p> <p>Decarbonization and climate change resilience projects implemented in overburdened communities</p>	<p>DOH has the infrastructure to use participatory budgeting as a model of co-governance for environmental health programs</p> <p>Community organization and Tribes have the structure and knowledge to engage in participatory budgeting environmental health programs</p>	<p>HEAL agencies and communities work together to develop and enact programs and policies</p> <p>Increased climate change resilience in overburdened communities</p>	<p>Communities are meaningfully involved in co-governance around environmental health</p> <p>Overburdened communities have what they need to be healthy and resilient to climate change</p> <p>Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in overburdened communities</p>

## Section 2: Analyze Environmental Benefits and Harms

### 1. Describe likely environmental benefits<sup>3</sup> for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribes associated with this action.

The intention of this program is to ultimately produce community identified projects that address decarbonization and climate resilience. The DOH submitted a proposal to Governor Inslee’s staff proposing that the \$32 million appropriated for projects during the 23-25 biennium be made available over the course of 6 years to the 6 communities identified by the community advisory committee. If funded for this period DOH will have the opportunity to directly engage with communities on a participatory budgeting process to identify and fund projects that address decarbonization and resilience.

If continued funding is made available, decarbonization projects have potential to reduce fossil-fuel generated greenhouse gases, improving air quality and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Climate resilience projects can include improving infrastructure and the built environment, making resources available to overburdened communities, and improving social cohesion within and between communities.

### 2. Describe likely environmental harms<sup>4</sup> for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribes associated with this action.

While there are no anticipated environmental harms associated with communities engaging in a participatory budgeting process, it is possible there may be potential environmental harms related to the projects communities choose to do.

### 3. Describe likely associated positive health impacts for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribes associated with this action.

Participatory budgeting is an example of co-governance where communities and government work together to determine how funds will be used to improve conditions for communities. In this case, six communities will be able to engage in a participatory budgeting process to identify and vote on decarbonization and resilience projects in their community, if funding is renewed. The exact health impacts of these projects will be realized after the participatory budgeting process has been implemented and the projects funded.

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<sup>3</sup> **Environmental benefits** mean activities that: (a) Prevent or reduce existing environmental harms or associated risks that contribute significantly to cumulative environmental health impacts; (b) Prevent or mitigate impacts to overburdened communities or vulnerable populations from, or support community response to, the impacts of environmental harm; or (c) meet a community need formally identified to a covered agency by an overburdened community or vulnerable population that is consistent with the intent of chapter 70A.02 RCW.

<sup>4</sup> **Environmental harm** means the individual or cumulative environmental health impacts and risks to communities caused by historic, current, or projected: (a) Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land; (b) Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change; (c) Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or (d) Health and economic impacts from climate change.

Decarbonization, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions, can mitigate climate change and help:

- Improve air quality which can improve respiratory and cardiovascular health
- Reduce incidence of heat-related illness such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, heat syncope, and rhabdomyolysis.
- Reduce risk of vector borne diseases. Warmer temperatures and changing precipitation patterns resulting from climate change can allow disease-carrying vectors like [mosquitos](#)<sup>5</sup> and [ticks](#)<sup>6</sup> to expand their geographic range and activity, increasing the risk of infectious diseases.<sup>7</sup>
- Reduce incidence of extreme weather events that can cause injuries, displacement, and mental health problems
- Reduce mental health impacts associated with climate change
- Reduce impacts on food systems. Disruptions to food production and distribution resulting from climate change can increase the risk of foodborne illnesses and affect the availability of food.

Climate resilience projects can address or mitigate impacts to vital infrastructure, as well as the health impacts listed above.

Furthermore, by bringing people together throughout these community-driven decision-making processes, the agency promotes social connectivity which is a protective factor for a variety of adverse health outcomes. Social connection can improve one’s healthy eating habits, physical activity, quality of sleep, and ability to manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Social connection can help reduce the risk of chronic disease and serious illness, such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression, and anxiety.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4. Describe likely associated negative health impacts for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribes associated with this action.**

While there are no anticipated negative health impacts for communities engaging in the participatory budgeting process, it is possible there may be potential health impacts related to projects communities choose to do. This will be clearer when projects are scoped and defined.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/pests/mosquitoes>

<sup>6</sup> <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/pests/ticks>

<sup>7</sup> <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/420567-ZoonoticClimateImpactsFlyer.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/about/index.html>

## Section 3: Identify Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

### 1. Identify the geographic area(s) where there may be environmental and health impacts as a result of the agency action.

DOH worked with a six-member community advisory committee (CAC) to identify at least five geographically diverse overburdened communities to participate in a participatory budgeting process. Members were selected based on their direct lived experience or working relationships with marginalized communities impacted by environmental inequities, experience with qualitative and participatory methods, their ability to apply equity and anti-racist principles to the work, and any other valuable or unique perspectives. Three members of the advisory committee were residents of King County, one from Spokane County, one from Pierce County, and one from Franklin County. Weekly meetings were held to identify the communities of focus.

Early meetings consisted of providing background information on the budget proviso, discussing key language in the proviso, Tribal relations, and the role of the Environmental Justice Council as well as understanding the overall purpose of the group's time together.

The committee discussed community vulnerabilities they would like to prioritize during this process. Vulnerabilities were split into different categories including exposures, threats, sensitivities, social vulnerabilities, climate hazards, cities, and land mass focus. These categories were based off the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) map. The committee spent a couple of weeks adding themes the group wanted to focus on and creating "umbrella themes", which encompassed vulnerabilities across the different categories. For example, an umbrella theme suggested was, "Urban communities, including people of color and low-income groups, face disproportionate exposure to air and water pollution from industrial activities and traffic congestion creating negative health effects and exacerbating existing conditions." During our discussions, the group emphasized including areas that have been continuously excluded from funding opportunities. The purpose of the vulnerabilities exercise was to get the group thinking about areas they would like to focus on. An example of this exercise is included below in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Example of Vulnerabilities Exercise**

Threats	Sensitivity	Social vulnerability	Climate Hazards	Cities	Land Mass Focus
Wastewater runoff, pesticide exposure, harvesting practices	Asthma	Migrant workers, Black communities, Immigrants, Indigenous communities, Invisible Indigenous (not part of 29 recognized Tribes or federally recognized Tribes), low socio-economic groups, education, Irresponsible urban development, food deserts, displaced communities due to green policies	Forest fires	Renton, Kennewick, Yakima, Everett, Pierce, White Center, Tacoma, Burien, South Park, Spokane, Tacoma tide flats	Rural, Urban, Unincorporated

The committee members proposed communities they would like to prioritize for the participatory budgeting process by giving presentations. Members gave presentations on the following communities: Tacoma, Yakima, Spokane (specifically the East Central and Hillyard area), Tacoma tide flats, Franklin County, South Park neighborhood of Seattle, Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle, and unincorporated areas of King County including Skyway and White Center. Some committee members used data from the Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) map while some committee members gave presentations based on their lived experience in these communities. Most members came to the group already knowing what areas they would like to propose based on their lived experience.

After doing presentations, the committee narrowed down its choices to the following communities. Communities are not ranked in any order.

**Table 4: Communities of Focus and Reasoning**

<b>Community of Focus</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)	<b>Reasoning for Prioritization</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)	<b>Source of Information</b>
<b>Benton County</b>	In Benton County, there is a housing crisis with many people living unhoused. Additionally, it is an agricultural community with poor air, water, and soil quality from cow farms and the pesticides used for agriculture.	Lived Experience
<b>Communities adjacent to Boeing (South Park and Georgetown)</b>	<p>In the city areas like Seattle and South Park, the impacts are great due to airplanes, water, soil, these areas are filled with lead and other contaminants that result from industrial machinery, boats. The University of Washington is doing a study regarding the area with the most concentrated cases of asthma is Georgetown in Seattle and South Park. These areas are closest to the airport and where these cases are concentrated. This serves as direct evidence of the grave contamination we have in the areas. There is also no plan to address these health concerns or treat individuals, the state is overlooking these regions and not offering any form of support to help clear out contaminants. Moreover, in those cities there are no clinics designated to treating asthma.</p> <p>In fact, if we focus on South Park there is a region where they have localized a recycling and waste management plant and now there are large trailers passing through as well. Planes constantly pass by at a rate of one plane per 40 seconds. There is also a large Boeing plant. There are also interstates that contribute to air pollution. Thus, adding to the multitude of layers of pollution and little and rarely is this talked about.</p> <p>In these areas of high contamination and pollution, people of color are the majority, and the public is not made aware. People move to these regions not knowing.</p>	Lived Experience

**Table 4 Continued: Communities of Focus and Reasoning**

<p><b>Community of Focus</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)</p>	<p><b>Reasoning for Prioritization</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)</p>	<p><b>Source of Information</b></p>
<p><b>Franklin County</b></p>	<p>Franklin County has the highest population of Black residents in non-urban, rural areas on the east side of the state. The majority of Black Washington residents live in Western Washington urban centers. While these areas have recorded environmental injustices, they also tend to receive more funding for remediation due to their location. We wanted the money to be dispersed to Black communities that may not get as much attention due to their size and locality. There is a large percentage of non-white and BIPOC groups in this county. According to the US census bureau, non-white groups comprise 61.1% of the county demographics (compared to about 28% for the entire state). The other dominant non-white or BIPOC group in Franklin County is the Hispanic (Spanish speaking) community. Outside of government, agriculture and manufacturing are the top industries, which means field work and the potential for various chemical exposures. The <a href="#">EHD map</a> was used to determine what environmental exposure this county is experiencing which included point source pollution from the manufacturing industry resulting in toxic concentrations of PM2.5. There are high levels ozone which is linked to cardiovascular and respiratory mortality and this county has close proximity to Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities, which release deadly chemicals to the surrounding environment and are directly linked to cancer and cardiovascular disease.</p>	<p>EHD Map</p>
<p><b>Spokane</b></p>	<p><b>East Central/Hillyard:</b> New freeway is being built that will divide the community and create more pollution. Historically Interstate 90 was built in the 60s dividing Spokane and contributing to pollution through greenhouse gasses, light pollution, and noise pollution. This disrupted communities and added higher potential for adverse health effects. This will happen again with the new freeway. East Central and Hillyard are two of the poorest communities in Spokane with Hillyard being labeled as the poorest community in WA (2016 – 2018 SNAP report). The freeway will shorten commutes but damage communities and seems like a necessary evil, but things must be done to counterbalance the negative.</p> <p><b>Agricultural areas</b></p>	<p>Lived Experience</p>

**Table 4 Continued: Communities of Focus and Reasoning**

<p><b>Community of Focus</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)</p>	<p><b>Reasoning for Prioritization</b> (in exact words from Community Advisory Committee)</p>	<p><b>Source of Information</b></p>
<p><b>Tacoma</b></p>	<p>Tacoma has an elevated rate of contamination in aerial, soil, water, air, and in rural areas. In such a manner that the individuals most affected are individuals with the least economic resources. Youth, children, and the elderly are even more vulnerable and impacted even more so directly. In such a manner that it would be important to create certain conditions to address these issues and create a conscious, so that individuals can take the proper precautions and measures to safeguard their wellbeing from things like asthma and lung damage that result from lead and arsenic exposures. For almost 100 years there was a mine operating in the region of Tacoma and as a result lots of contaminants accumulated in the soil exposing individuals that live in the surrounding areas. These areas are of low socio-economic standing and individuals impacted have a hard time finding resources and cannot afford to live somewhere else.</p> <p><b>Tacoma tide flats:</b> Tacoma tide flats is home to biodiversity which is essential to resilience to climate change. These areas purify water, helping prevent negative health effects, help with flood control, which is essential with rising sea levels, help regulate climate by absorbing carbon dioxide, absorb heat which lowers the temperature of the already hot city, food source which affects native communities in the area. Puget Sound Energy's LNG terminal transports liquid natural gas which is at risk for spillage, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise and light pollution. This area is especially susceptible to pollution due to the existing industrial infrastructure and deep-water port. Pollution in this highly populated area created health disparities that are expensive to treat or prevent. Tacoma is 35.5% higher in poverty than the whole of Washington and has 2.5 times higher population of African Americans in Tacoma than in Washington as a whole.<sup>9</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lived Experience</li> <li>• Community Demographics and Risk Factors<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>
<p><b>Yakima</b></p>	<p>In rural areas, the air quality is terrible for multiple reasons. The soil is damaged, the water is damaged, and the air is damaged. And these three factors impact the health of the community. There is great contamination due to the greenhouses, cow farms for meat and milk consumption, also the machinery used and pesticides that results from agriculture.</p>	<p>Lived Experience</p>

<sup>9</sup> <https://cms.cityoftacoma.org/ncs/gang-reduction/2019GangAssessmentSection2CommunityDemographics.pdf>

**2. Describe overburdened communities<sup>10</sup> and vulnerable populations<sup>11</sup> (OBC/VP) identified within the geographic area(s) where there may be environmental and health impacts as a result of the agency action.**

**Table 5: Identified OBC/VP within Geographic Areas of Focus**

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>OBC/VP identified</b>
Yakima	Farmworkers, elderly, etc.
Tacoma	Youth, children, elderly
Communities adjacent to Boeing including South Park and Georgetown	Youth, People with Asthma, BIPOC
Spokane	Low-income communities, Farmworkers
Franklin County	Black communities
Benton County	Farmworkers, People living unhoused

## Section 4: Tribal Engagement and Consultation

**1. Summarize Tribal engagements and invitations for Tribal consultation to date.**

A Dear Tribal Leader Letter went out to Tribes in Washington State on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, inviting their collaboration on three budget provisos including the HEAL Tribal Capacity Grant, Workplace Safety for Workers Affected by Climate Change, and Community Budgeting for Decarbonization and Resilience. A listening session was held in August 2023.

**Consultation**

DOH held a roundtable on September 6, 2023, discussing the three grants. During the listening session and the roundtable, the HEAL capacity grant emerged as the priority for consultation in 2023.

Another Dear Tribal Leader Letter went out on April 5, 2024, to invite Tribes to collaborate on the Climate Worker Safety grant and the Community Informed Budgeting project. A briefing was held in May to provide more information on these two projects. At the conclusion of the Tribal Briefing, attendees decided to move forward with Consultation. Roundtables were held in June and July and Consultation was held in July.

A Dear Tribal Leader letter closing the consultation was sent on September 18, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> **Overburdened community** means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020.

<sup>11</sup> **Vulnerable populations** means population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to: (i) Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and (ii) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.

**Vulnerable populations** include but are not limited to:

- (i) Racial or ethnic minorities;
- (ii) Low-income populations;
- (iii) Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and
- (iv) Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

## **Engagement**

Staff attended virtual spaces to share information including the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA) roundtables, and Climate Pollution Reduction Grant – Tribal Workgroup (CPRG).

### **2. Describe likely impacts to Tribal rights and resources associated with this action.**

DOH shared the budget proviso language with Tribes, particularly that projects cannot be funded without the approval of the legislature. Furthermore, per recommendations from Tribes, DOH acknowledged that the participatory budgeting process that will be utilized with communities will not be used with Tribes, in recognition of Tribal sovereignty. Tribes will follow the collaborative process they already use when identifying projects to fund.

### **3. Summarize how information received from Tribes and Tribal organizations informed decision-making about this action.**

During the listening session and roundtable discussion, Tribes made clear that they preferred setting aside a percentage of available funds to be evenly distributed among Tribes over a competitive process. As a result, DOH brought a proposal to set aside 10% of funds to be equally distributed among the 29 federally recognized Tribes based on what the agency had learned in prior consultations regarding funds. Tribal leaders agreed to this distribution of funds. Additionally, out of recognition of Tribal sovereignty, DOH and Tribes agreed that Tribes would use their existing collaborative processes to identify projects to fund, instead of the participatory budgeting process.

### **4. Describe any plans for ongoing and/or future Tribal engagement after the publication of the EJ Assessment.**

In the 2025-2027 biennium, funding for this program was renewed by legislature and the Department of Commerce was tasked with implementation.

## Section 5: Community Engagement Summary

### 1. Summarize engagement with people from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to date.

Please see Section 2 Question 1 which detailed the process followed by the Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

In addition to engagement with the CAC, A youth advisory committee composed of 16 young people aged 16 to 25 years old was convened in February 2025. Members of the committee met 10 times between February and the beginning of June 2025. The youth advisory committee provided recommendations to DOH on how to design the participatory budgeting process.

### 2. Summarize information received from people from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

Please see Section 2 for a detailed description of how a community advisory committee selected six geographically diverse communities to engage in the participatory budgeting process.

The youth advisory committee (YAC) provided recommendations to DOH on the various components for designing the participatory budgeting process, including goals and values, scoping, steering committee selection, participation criteria, outreach and engagement, and voting. The YAC recommended the following overarching goals and values for the PB process.

#### YAC Recommended Goals

- To ensure communities have the resources, information, and support to improve their surroundings together
- To remain responsive and adaptive to changing community needs by implementing planned projects within one to five years.

#### YAC Recommended Values

- Accountability – the responsibility of governing bodies to acknowledge and take ownership of any past harms they may have caused; the responsibility individuals have to one another, to their communities, and to other places that may be affected.
- Accessibility – everyone can understand and access information and resources.
- Equity – ensuring all communities are being represented within the process and the need to consider how various communities will be reached and resourced to participate.
- Sustainability – using resources in a way that maintains and addresses present needs, while also considering the longevity of these resources for future needs.

### 3. Summarize how information received from people from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations informed decision-making about this action.

Overburdened communities and vulnerable populations are ultimately shaping decision-making throughout this program. As described previously, the community advisory committee selected the communities, and the youth advisory committee shaped the design of the participatory budgeting process.

**4. Describe any plans for ongoing engagement with people from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations after publication of the EJ Assessment.**

If funded again, the participatory budgeting process will engage overburdened communities and vulnerable populations throughout each step of the process.

## Section 6: Strategies to Address Environmental Harms and Equitably Distribute Environmental Benefits

1. Which of the following strategies will the agency pursue to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate environmental harms and equitably distribute environmental benefits (check all that apply):

- Eliminating the disparate impact of environmental harms on overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.
- Reducing cumulative environmental health impacts on overburdened communities or vulnerable populations.
- Preventing the action from adding to the cumulative environmental health impacts on overburdened communities or vulnerable populations.
- Providing opportunities for equitable participation and meaningful engagement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities in the development of the significant agency action.
- Prioritizing equitable distribution of resources and benefits to overburdened communities.
- Promoting positive workforce and job outcomes for overburdened communities.
- Meeting community needs identified by the affected overburdened community.
- Modifying substantive regulatory or policy requirements

Any other mitigation techniques, including those suggested by any one of the following:

- Environmental Justice Council
- Office of Equity
- Representatives of overburdened communities and/or vulnerable populations.

2. Briefly describe the proposed method/approach for each strategy selected in Section 5, Question 1.

**Providing opportunities for equitable participation and meaningful engagement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities in the development of the significant agency action**

To provide opportunities for equitable participation and engagement in the development of this grant program, a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Youth Advisory Committee were convened. Additionally, during the development of this grant, formal and informal Tribal engagement occurred. Recommendations and feedback from communities and Tribes shaped decision-making throughout the course of this program.

**Prioritizing equitable distribution of resources and benefits to overburdened communities**

Participatory budgeting in itself is intended to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and benefits to overburdened communities. If funding is renewed, the participatory budgeting process can be implemented, community-identified projects can be funded, and the environmental and health benefits of decarbonization and climate resilience can be realized in the communities that need it most.

**Meeting community needs identified by the overburdened community**

If funding is renewed, overburdened communities will participate in a participatory budgeting process. During the participatory budgeting process, communities will determine what decarbonization and climate resilience projects are most important for their communities and put forth project proposals. These project proposals will be community identified and demonstrate their priorities.

**3. Describe additional strategies the program has identified to eliminate, reduce, and/or mitigate harms and equitably distribute benefits.**

DOH has identified the following strategies that would support mitigating harms and equitably distributing benefits:

- Remove the timeline on the project, this would require at least 6 years.
- Change to the capital budget instead of operating so unused funds can be carried over.
- Remove the requirement for legislative approval, because it goes against the principles of PB.

**4. If the agency determines that it does not have the ability or authority to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate environmental harms caused by a significant agency action, or does not have the ability or authority to address the equitable distribution of environmental benefits, provide a clear explanation of why it has made that determination.**

N/A

**5. Identify performance measures or indicators (recommended 3-5) that can be used to track the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and/or the elimination, reduction, or mitigation of environmental harms for overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, or Tribes.**

See Section 1

## Section 7: Allocate Funding to Provide Benefits for Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

- 1. How did you allocate funding with the intention of benefiting overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and/or Tribes? (e.g., reducing or eliminating environmental harms, creating community and population resilience, improving the quality of life of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations) Describe your decision-making process.**

Allocations for this funding from the legislature included \$6,000,000 to establish and administer the grant program and engage in a participatory budgeting process and \$32,600,000 solely for providing grant funds to overburdened communities. The funds for granting were not distributed. This decision was made due to the limited amount of time to identify communities, develop project proposals, and get approval from the legislature. See previous sections of this document for how the remaining funds were used to inform the participatory budgeting process for the benefit of overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and/or Tribes.

- 2. If applicable, did you consider a broad scope of grants and contracting opportunities that effectuate environmental justice principles for your program? If so, please indicate which of the below options outlined in statute you incorporated into your program:**

- Community grants to monitor pollution;
- Grants focused on building capacity and providing training for community scientists and other staff;
- Making technical assistance available for communities that may be new to receiving agency grant funding; and
- Education and work readiness youth programs focused on infrastructure or utility-related internships to develop career paths and leadership skills for youth
- Other:

- 3. What proportion of funds were intended to benefit overburdened communities, vulnerable populations, and Tribes? Please provide a dollar amount in addition to a percentage of total funds allocated.**

100%, \$38,600,000

- 4. If you determined that it was not practicable to take any of the actions under RCW 70A.02.080, please explain why.**

N/A



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